

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

Becket, Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Otis, Plainfield, Russell, Sandisfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, Worthington

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HAMPSHIRE

HRSC makes no change to school model yet

By Peter Spotts

The Hampshire Regional School Committee made no changes to the current school hybrid model while monitoring rising COVID-19 cases in the district, specifically Southampton, at its meeting on Thursday, Jan. 14.

The committee met on Thursday, Jan. 14 to discuss the situation and see if they needed to make a change to a remote model. The majority of the committee continues to support in-person learning in the hybrid model and the benefits it provides. Sarah Christiansen, one of the committee members from Williamsburg, spoke about her personal experience of COVID-19 on her and her family and why she feels the district can continue the current model safely.

“I have felt just deeply torn around this, and my no vote is really based on, I think as you all know, sort of my direct experience with

CHANGES, page 7

Posing Pooch



Finely poses at the snowy Sanderson Falls in Chester.

Submitted photo by Lyle Congdon

BECKET

Marijuana hearing continued til Feb.

By Peter Spotts

The Planning Board made no ruling on the proposed marijuana cultivation facility at 509 Quarry Road last Wednesday, Jan. 13, after the public hearing ran deep into the night and will continue the discussion next month.

Brian Vincent and Mark Goodenough from Tetrahydra Agtek LLC. were on hand to answer questions from nearly 30 assembled members of the Planning Board and the public in the Zoom meeting.

MARIJUANA, page 6

GATEWAY

GRSC considers virtual school cap

By Shelby Macri

The Gateway School Committee meeting allowed members to discuss a few issues of importance, including the impending start of winter athletics and virtual schooling at its Jan. 13 meeting.

The committee members then discussed agreements with the Commonwealth’s Virtual Schools as some Gateway students are enrolling in virtual schools and the committee wanted to decide on a cap for the number of students within those schools. If the student is attending a virtual school, it is limited to 1% of the student body then the virtual school doesn’t charge Gateway a cost. However, there are currently 1.3% of Gateway students attending the virtual school full-time.

VIRTUAL, page 7

WORTHINGTON

Interim COA coordinator looks forward to opportunities

By Shelby Macri

The new Interim Council on Aging Coordinator Phyllis Dassatti stepped into her role on Dec. 8 and is looking forward to what her team will accomplish this year after her first month on the job.

During her first month of the job, Dassatti helped organize a holiday luncheon for town seniors at the Rabbit Hole Restaurant, where they served 158 meals. COA Board members helped hand out meals to attendees and talk with people they haven’t seen as a group since the COVID-19 shutdown start-

ed last March. There were Christmas music and decorations to stay festive during the roast beef dinner.

“We’re definitely going to hold more things; we used to have a monthly luncheon, so it was nice to have one again,” Dassatti said. “I’m planning on having more things and activities to serve the seniors. There are so many things we can do post covid; possibly doing more things on Zoom and online.”

Dassatti is comfortable planning events as she volunteered for the COA as the



COA Interim Coordinator Phyllis Dassatti, center, pictured with COA members Camille Smith, left, Susan Van Buren, LeAnn Mason, and Helyn Myrick during the COA Holiday Luncheon on Monday, Dec. 21.

Submitted photo

COA, page 6

WILLIAMSBURG

Library gets min. wage increase

By Peter Spotts

The Selectboard is raising the minimum wage for five town positions to be in accordance with the state minimum wage as voted at its meeting on Thursday, Jan. 14.

The change brings an increase to about \$1,300 for the current budget after the \$0.75 per hour raise is applied

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HILLTOWNS



Highlands Footpath Collaborative member Meredyth Babcock works with Allen Williams of Chester Granite Co. to place granite block benches in the new Sanderson Brook parking welcome area.

Submitted photos



From left, Alec Gillman of DCR and Highlands Footpath Collaborative members Jeff Penn and Andy Myers celebrate installation of the kiosk panels produced by DCR to help orient visitors to the State Forest.

Improvements made to Chester-Blandford state forest visitor experience

Members of the Highlands Footpath collaborative recently installed a welcome area with an informational kiosk and granite benches at the Sanderson Brook Trail parking area at Chester-Blandford State Forest.

Chester Town Administrator Katherine Warden said, “Given the much higher use we’ve have been seeing at the State Forest during the pandemic, we are thrilled about this project. It means that visitors have a place to look at maps and orient themselves before taking a hike.”

The project was made possible by a grant to the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission from the Commonwealth’s Mass Trails Grant Program, adminis-

tered by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. For the welcome area project, Allen Williams of Chester Granite Company, Inc. also donated two of the granite benches, labor, and use of a boom truck for the installation. Canterbury Farms’ David Bacon built the kiosk and DCR produced the beautiful interpretive signs installed within the kiosk.

The welcome area is part of a larger project that the Highlands Footpath collaborative undertook in the State Forest, the aim being to establish an important Highlands Footpath linkage from Round Hill Road in the west to the eastern part of the Chester Blandford State Forest.

The project in the state forest included engineering design of a bridge to reestablish a crossing at Sanderson Brook, and restoration of segments along the Newman Marsh Trail, including installation of granite steps at the steep trailhead, boulder steps in a steep area on Observation Hill, and several structures along the length of the trail to better control erosion.

The Chester-Blandford State Forest project adds to several linkages now that are helping to establish the pathway for the planned long-distance hiking trail known as the Highlands Footpath. The vision is to one day be able to hike from October Mountain State Forest in Lee to

DAR State Forest in Goshen via Becket, Chester, Huntington, Worthington, Chesterfield and Cummington.

Highlands Footpath Treasurer and Chester resident Andy Myers said, “These upgrades to Chester’s connection to the Footpath come at an exciting time. Our collaborative is preparing now to work with the Commonwealth to secure additional funding via its Capital Budget, which will hopefully include an initial allocation of the \$500,000 authorized for the Highlands Footpath in its most recent Environmental Bond bill, secured by Senator Adam Hinds.”

For a short video on the kiosk, visit youtu.be/frvkgBCRN9c.

Hinds and Blais create rural fund

State Sen. Adam G. Hinds (D-Pittsfield) and Rep. Natalie Blais (D-Sunderland) announced their legislation to establish the \$100 million Massachusetts Rural Growth Fund was secured during the end of the 2019-2020 legislative session.

The Massachusetts Rural Growth Fund will enable small businesses to expand and create private-sector jobs by providing access to affordable, growth capital by establishing the Rural Jobs Tax Credit for businesses that make a capital contribution to a rural growth fund and create a tax credit for contributions to such funds by the applicant.

“A key part of our economic recovery will be to actively incentivize increased investments in our small towns,” said Hinds. “The Massachusetts Rural Growth Fund gives small businesses, and their communities, the platform to achieve long term, sustainable growth.”

“The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the economic challenges faced by the 170 rural communities across the Commonwealth,” said Blais. “This legislation could not have come at a more opportune time, injecting the much-needed private capital that is necessary in the short term to yield long-term economic growth.”

The Growth Fund will target small businesses to receive growth investments which means they must have fewer than 250 employees or show less than \$10 million in revenue during the previous year. Qualified

fund managers must apply to become Rural Growth Funds, to invest in and mentor rural, small businesses in Massachusetts and participate in the program. The program creates a tax credit for contributions to such funds by the applicant.

“For the 2019 Massachusetts Rural Policy Plan, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments examined a study that found that many state and federal economic policies base their funding decisions on “innovation” that is narrowly defined as patent applications and research and development, which leaves out many businesses that are critical to the Commonwealth’s rural economy and our small towns,” said Linda Dunlavy, executive director of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and chair of the Rural Policy Advisory Commission. “The Massachusetts Rural Growth Fund will provide a needed opportunity for rural businesses to recover, grow and expand.”

“Rural areas have not recovered since the Great Recession the way our larger cities have because of challenges like slow infrastructure development, declining and aging population, lack of access to capital and economic opportunities,” Hinds added. “The ultimate goals of the Rural Growth Fund are to spur economic development in rural communities and to support small businesses in those communities. This will not only create jobs, but it will also keep jobs in the Commonwealth.”

Signups for Girl Scouts outdoor skills event open Saturday, Feb. 6

The Girl Scouts of Central & Western Massachusetts invites girls and their guardian to Intro to Outdoor Skills on the grounds of the Unitarian Society of Northampton on Saturday, Feb. 6. The event is for girls in grades K-1 who are not yet Girl Scout members. Girls will earn their first Girl Scout patch while learning basic campfire building techniques, first aid, and jackknife safety.

Local Girl Scouts will put to use new sales strategies and technology skills honed during a global pandemic as Girl Scouts of Central & Western Massachusetts kicks off the 2021 Girl Scout Cookie season. The cookie season like no other begins this Friday, Jan. 15.

Girl Scouts are selling in creative, socially distant, and contact-free ways to keep themselves and their customers safe during a challenging time. Even in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, girls are adapting their sales methods to share the joy of Girl Scout Cookies through the largest girl-led entrepreneurship program-including taking contact-free pickup and delivery orders through a new national collaboration with Grubhub. Additionally, Girl Scouts of the USA is making online cookie ordering available nationwide on Feb. 1 so consumers who don’t know a Girl Scout can still purchase cookies from a local troop for direct shipment to their homes or donation to local

Here are the ways local Girl Scouts will be selling cookies this year:

- Online: Girl Scouts will be selling cookies online through Digital Cookie and social media (with parental supervision) to promote their virtual cookie

ty. Sign up is at <http://bit.ly/GSOOutdoor>.

Space is limited. All COVID-19 safety precautions will be followed. This is an outdoor event, dress accordingly. RSVP and register at bit.ly/GSOOutdoor

For more information contact GSCWM Recruitment Manager Tammy Gilpatrick at tgilpatrick@gscwm.org or 508-749-3639.

Girl Scout cookie season launches with safe sales strategies online

business to friends and family. Whether its emails, door hangers, or virtual cookie booths, customers will have contactless purchase and delivery options as well as the option to donate cookies to GSCWM’s Project Care & Share (cookies for U.S. service men and women).

- Cookie Booths: Drive-through cookie booths, “lemonade stand style” neighborhood booths, and traditional storefront cookies booths at local establishments including GNC. Girls are exploring new and innovative ways to sell cookies directly to the public while also making sure to follow COVID-19 safety protocols based on Governor Charlie Baker and local health board restrictions.
- Grubhub and GSUSA National Online Cookie program: New this year, customers can support their local Girl Scouts by purchasing through Grubhub in select areas including Holyoke, Lee and Worcester. Customers who don’t know a Girl Scout will still be able to order from a local Girl Scout through GSUSA’s National Online program. Both methods offer contactless online purchase and delivery.

To find cookies, visit www.girlscouts.org/en/cookies/all-about-cookies/support-girls-success.html.



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GOSHEN

Drilling begins for new Fire Department well

By Shelby Macri

GOSHEN — During the Jan. 11 meeting, the Selectboard addressed the Fire Department’s well project, as the current well has bacteria in the water and salt from the road has contaminated the water and eroded parts of the well and water tank.

The current well at the Fire Department Building is a shallow well, so more surface water and debris was able to get into the well water. The town conducted a water test and found there was bacteria in the well water, making it unusable and undrinkable for the department. These water tests are done routinely, and the well water has had bacteria within it for a few years, and Fire Chief

Sue Labrie has asked the state for help and funding previously; she was denied due to the fact that it is a shallow well and the surrounding land can contaminate it.

Recently, the well has shown signs of corrosion because of the amount of salt on the state road the building is located on, because it’s a state road that contributes to the salt the state is helping to fund the project. The salt has corroded parts of the well and the water tank, so the state will be helping to fund the well and water tank replacement. The town will be providing the rest of the funding for the remainder of the project.

Drilling for the well began Friday, Jan. 15, and will continue thru Thursday, Jan. 28, the next step will be to make

trenching from the well to the building for the connecting pipes. The trenching will be dug four to five feet deep for the pipes to connect to the well and be covered from exposure. Once there is water in the well, pumping equipment will be put in and plumbing for the well to connect to the water tank will commence. Finally, once the plumbing has been finished, an electrician will come in to inspect the work and connect the new water system to the electricity panel in the building to the water is pumped from the new well.

“The pump installation and trenching to the building is expected to begin after the drilling,” Town Administrator Dawn Scaparotti said. “The pump is expected by Jan. 21, I believe. By the

end of January, we expect to have a new well.”

This well project was approved several years ago and was added to the Capitol Plan then, as it is important to have good water running to the building.

The Fire Department building has had a few projects recently, including roof repair due to water damage and the board is currently looking at replacing a few panels of the building that are decaying. The Selectboard is making sure that the Fire Department is set up for success this year, and that all projects for the Fire Department building are going well and according to plan. The town and Fire Department are looking forward to the completion of the well project.

Fiber correction work expects completion in February

GOSHEN — National Grid finished make ready work in May 2020, two months ahead of schedule. They replaced 108 poles and moved wires on all the poles in town.

Verizon has finished their make ready work of moving wires on all utility poles as of Oct. 21, 2020.

Axia/KCST and their subcontractor Phoenix have completed all of their make ready work to move middle mile lines for MBI along portions of Route 9 as of Nov. 5, 2020.

Project engineer inspection ride outs by Westfield Gas & Electric, as well as both National Grid and Verizon, began in tandem on Nov. 16, 2020 and were completed on Dec. 2. This work is to verify that all the work done by National Grid, Verizon and MBI was

done to regulatory and project engineering specifications. Deficiencies that are found are documented and then have to be corrected by the utility companies. Inspections indicate that there are 107 mostly minor items to be remediated by National Grid. National Grid began their remediation work on Dec. 8 and they completed their remediation work on Dec. 21. Verizon has 33 items to be corrected and was scheduled to being on Jan. 8. As of Jan. 9, Verizon had no estimated date of completion for their work. MBI middle mile remediation work has begun and is expected to be completed by Feb. 7. The anticipated timeline for completion of remediation work is February, but may change depending upon winter weather. Updated timelines will be posted as

information is available.

Fiber construction build out will begin after completion of all the above tasks including any remediation work that is required after inspections are completed.

Further updates will be made as new developments occur.

As the town gets closer to completing the above items, there will be announcements about enrollment periods for fiber to the home service and the process to follow as well as costs, subsidies, and policies.

In regard to the Network Hut, which contains all of the electronic brains for controlling the fiber optic network, it was delivered, together with the backup generator, on Nov.23. The propane tank for the backup generator

was installed on Dec. 16 and connected on Jan. 8.

National Grid installed a utility pole and connecting wires to provide electric service to the hut on Dec. 21. Electricity has been connected to the hut and generator as of Dec. 31.

A live generator fail over test needs to be conducted and settings need to be made by the installation company.

When all of the above tasks are completed, fiber optic cable and the components required to operate the fiber optic network will be installed and tested by Westfield Gas & Electric in preparation for the construction of the distribution network which should begin in the early part of 2021.

Updates on these processes will be posted as they are accomplished.

HUNTINGTON

NORWICH HILL

The First Congregational Church of Huntington reminds everyone even though our physical doors are closed until further notice, we are most definitely open for worship, praise, ministry, and fellowship. We are an Open and Affirming Church inviting, welcoming and affirming everyone — seekers, believers, and wonderers alike — on their journey of faith, to join in 10 a.m. Zoom Sunday worship.

In our reading for the Third Sunday after Epiphany, Mark 1:14-20, we hear Jesus calling disciples to embrace God’s realm as we are invited to wonder about leaving the familiar to embrace the good news and companion with God on a journey of transformation and new ways of being

in our day.

The pastor is always available to speak with you. If you do not receive our emails and would like to connect with our Zoom worship service and/or fellowship time, please contact Pastor Carol at firstchurchofhuntington@gmail.com to receive the information you will need to participate or send us a message on Facebook.

Please use the phone numbers and email address provided to stay in touch or to contact the pastor. You are also invited to find us on Facebook at “Norwich Hill” for updates, information and spiritual encouragement. For more information, please contact 413-667-3935 or 860-798-7771 or firstchurchofhuntington@gmail.com.

COA to host Valentine’s lunch

GOSHEN — The Goshen COA is offering a curbside valentine luncheon on Tuesday, Feb. 9. The menu will be roast pork dinner or grilled chicken breast prepared by the Spruce Corner Restaurant. Dessert will be from Red’s Bakery. Serving time will be from 11:30 a.m. to

noon and participants are asked to contribute a \$5 donation. These meals are provided for Goshen residents. If someone is unable to pick up their meal, plans can be made for delivery. Please make a reservation by calling Evelyn at 413-268-3316.

WESTHAMPTON

February schedule at Library features storywalk, craft kits

WESTHAMPTON — The Westhampton Public Library has several events planned for patrons next month and will be closed on Monday, Feb. 15.

From Feb. 16 to Feb. 20, during curbside pickup hours, CFCE and the library are putting up a storywalk and scavenger hunt in the library for school vacation week. Follow the pages of “Love from the Very Hungry Caterpillar” with a loved one, then grab a heart scavenger hunt sheet by the main entrance to the library. Follow the clues and find hearts scattered throughout the library yard. The library loves everyone, so come join in the fun! All participants must wear a mask and practice social distancing of six feet or more. The CDC does not recommend face coverings for children under age 2.

Virtual Book group returns on Tuesday, Feb. 23, at 7 p.m. “The Trouble with Goats and Sheep” by Joanna Cannon is the February read — “part coming-of-age story, part mystery, ‘The Trouble with Goats and Sheep’ is a quirky and utterly charming debut about a community in need of absolution and two girls learning what it means to

belong.” Please message westhampton@cwmar.org to request a copy and for a Zoom link.

Youth Services Librarian Emily Wayne’s storytime group is growing. Connect with other families and beat the social isolation. Email ewayne@cwmar.org for Zoom login every Wednesday at 10:30 a.m.

Emily also has a few Winter/Spring craft kits for kids left! Crafts include a Lunar New Year dragon puppet, clothespin airplane, fairy garden, and a felt ball ice cream cone. Please contact Emily at ewayne@cwmar.org to request your kit.

The Valentine take & make craft is an upcycled cardboard “vintage” heart ornament. Emily has also created a special Hygge craft kit this month. Hygge is from the Danish “a quality of coziness and comfortable conviviality that engenders a feeling of contentment or well-being.” Hygge crafts include a mug cozy, birch bark votive holder, and microwaveable heating pad. Please contact Director Meaghan Schwelm at mschwelm@cwmar.org to request a kit. Adult and teen kits are recommended for ages 12 or older.

News, photo publication policy

As a community newspaper our focus has always been local news. While we try very hard to run upcoming events as a public service whenever space allows, space does not allow us to run an upcoming event repeatedly. Our policy is to limit publication of upcoming events to one article in advance of the event and, space permitting, a second brief reminder article the week prior to an event, and to run those articles in only one section of the paper, and not in multiple sections simultaneously.

All such public service announcements and photos are subject to space limitations and deadlines, therefore publication cannot be guaranteed. Whenever copy for the week exceeds allotted space, news copy will take priority, and public service copy is the first area to be cut. We also reserve the right to edit for style and space, and are under no obligation to print lists of sponsorships, or articles that arrive after deadline, unless time and space allows.

Deadline is Monday at NOON, on holidays it is Friday at 2 p.m.



OPINION

EDITORIAL

What patriotism means to her

Washington, D.C., may be nearly 400 miles from here, but there’s no doubt that the rampage that occurred in the Capitol complex on Jan. 6 is on the minds of many local residents. We know at least a few people from the Western Massachusetts area were in the vicinity when a violent mob forced its way into the complex, assaulting police officers and vandalizing the complex, including the offices of members of Congress.

Despite that unmistakable criminal conduct, heated debate over the mob’s actions will no doubt continue for years. Perhaps even decades. People who have staked out political positions on the “left” or “right” – as well as those who claim middle ground – have disparate opinions on what unfolded. That is troubling.

Anyone who saw the siege at the Capitol in real time or watched the footage afterward should logically conclude that it was a lawless act. Political ideology aside, citizens in a nation of laws shouldn’t have to think twice to decide whether or not breaching police lines, assaulting officers, and destroying and stealing property is criminal activity.

All the communities in our region are undeniably patriotic. Respect for active duty service members, veterans, and the local police department runs deep. Our towns believe in the U.S. Constitution and law and order in general. Those who argue that members of the mob that terrorized Congress and desecrated the Capitol complex – the so-called “peoples house” – are patriotic citizens may never be persuaded otherwise.

Nonetheless, we’re hopeful. Sometimes it takes a tiny voice to be heard over the political din. That’s why we want to highlight the words of Katherine Anselmo, a seventh grader at Baird Middle School who won first place in the Ludlow VFW’s Patriot’s Pen youth essay contest. Her essay now represents all of Western Mass. in the statewide VFW contest. Katherine’s adolescent innocence and optimism is just what we need right now. Her words are heartfelt and perfectly define what it means to be a patriotic American who believes in “We the people.”

Here are brief excerpts from her essay: *“Patriotism is a love or devotion to one’s country. I think of the people who fought for our freedoms...from the branches of the military, to law enforcement, to fire and rescue who dedicate themselves and risk their lives for us... It is about democracy and the right to vote. It is about compassion for our country as we join together in unity, so we come out stronger. We don’t always agree, but we respect the right to disagree...Patriotism is about ‘a nation united stays strong, but a nation divided will weaken.’”*

Wow. Powerful words from this young patriotic student.

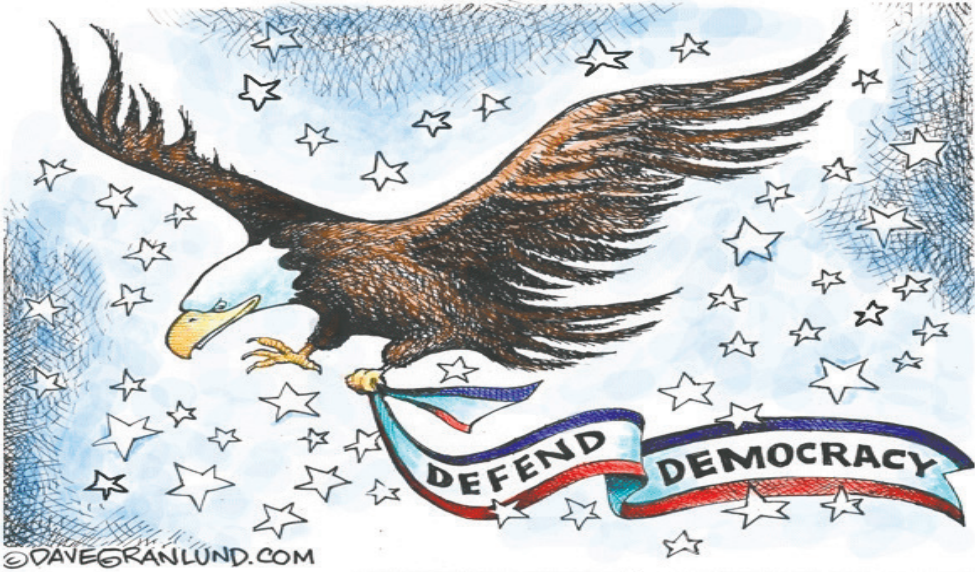
This week, Joseph R. Biden Jr., who won a majority of the popular vote here in the Commonwealth, in the nation and in the Electoral College, was inaugurated as our 46th president. No one expects all Americans to agree with his policies and positions. That would be absurd and, perhaps somewhat ironically, un-American. But he is the lawfully elected next President of the United States and, as Katherine so eloquently reminds us, we don’t need to agree to stay united.

This one fact, however, about the 2020 election, is indisputable.

Corrections policy

If you notice a factual error in our pages, please let us know, so that we can set the record straight. Email information to countryjournal@turley.com, or call us at 413-283-8393.

Corrections will be printed in the same section where the error originally occurred.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why people (actually) hate Trump

This letter is in response to “Why People Hate Trump,” The Country Journal, Jan. 14.

There are many reasons why people hate Donald Trump. His presidency, campaigns, rhetoric, and legacy will go down in history as one of the most divisive in the modern era.

Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the Paris Climate Accords, a non-binding agreement among dozens of nations to commit to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. He relentlessly propped up failing coal plants across the country, delaying the inevitable total collapse of the industry while refusing to push for policies that would actually benefit the coal miners instead of the coal CEOs. His EPA systematically rolled back regulations of all stripes, allowing companies to pollute our air and water without retribution. While he has signed bipartisan agreements like the Save Our Seas and Great Outdoors Act, Trump has made it his mission to insult, degrade, and refuse to work with any legislator, regardless of party, who dares to criticize him. Trump attacked those who protested for racial equality and police reform as “thugs” and criminals, and tear gassed those same protestors within walking distance of the White House to take a photo op holding a Bible upside-down. His trade war severely hurt manufacturers and farmers, and disrupted some aspects of the U.S. supply chain for months and cost several thousand workers their jobs and livelihoods.

He cruelly separated mothers from their children in the name of “national security,” and shut down the federal government for over a week in a temper tantrum for funds

to build a useless wall. He is a petty, brash business failure who likely lost more money over the course of his career than any other American. He called our brave men and women serving overseas “suckers,” attacked the war hero John McCain relentlessly, refused to attend a memorial service for WWI soldiers in France and military brass had to hide a Navy destroyer from his gaze because it bore the name of John McCain. He was a laughingstock to the international community and jeopardized our historical alliances while cozying up to strongmen and dictators. He has done more to erode American trust in institutions like the free press than any president before him.

Democrats are by no means pure angels. But it was Democrats who took necessary steps to prevent the spread of coronavirus, Democrats who constantly pushed for greater stimulus, Democrats who urged the public to accept scientific truths about COVID-19 while the President refused to wear a mask. Operation Warp-Speed provided a vaccine, but the Trump administrations obsession with overturning a democratic election — that Republican officials, judges, and Attorney General William Barr said did not have evidence of widespread voter fraud — made it so officials refused to cooperate with the incoming administration in carrying on the slow and mismanaged vaccine distribution. Perhaps most of all, Trump’s embrace of far-right supporters who espouse Q-Anon conspiracy theories and white nationalism led to a violent mob storming the Capitol building and led to five deaths. If that is acceptable behavior, then what isn’t.

Brian Forgeue
Chester

Commonality between abortion and racism

The 48th anniversary of Roe v Wade this Friday, Jan. 22, occurs in the same week as the celebration of the birth of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Roe v Wade mandated abortion nationwide and led to the destruction of 60 million babies.

There’s commonality between abortion and racism, according to Alveda King, the niece of Dr Rev Martin Luther King, Jr., “Abortion and racism are both symptoms of a fundamental human error. The error is thinking that when something is in the way of our wants, we can justify getting that person out of our lives. Abortion and racism stem from the same poisonous root — selfishness....”

“Abortion and racism are twin evils, born of the same lie. Where racism now hides its face in public, abortion is accomplishing the goals of which racism only once dreamed. Together, abortionists are destroy-

ing humanity at large, and the black community in particular.”

She decried the fact that black women are more than five times as likely as a white woman to have an abortion. She said that since black lives matter, black lives should not be aborted. Alveda said that her uncle, Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, would have agreed with her.

She herself had two abortions which she regrets. Her parents considered aborting her until “Daddy King,” Martin Luther King, Sr, told her parents that Alveda wasn’t a lump of flesh, but his granddaughter.

Last year we witnessed the senseless killings of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor Ahmaud Arbery and others. In 2021 let’s end the targeting of black lives, especially innocent babies.

Robin Greenspan
Becket

Fire Department appreciation

The article on the Huntington Fire Department in the Country Journal on Dec. 31 was well written and interesting. I would just like to add to the article that I was delighted when I came home from church on a recent Sunday to find a bucket of sand near my doorway. I understand that our fire

department left such sand buckets at the doorway of many senior’s in Huntington. We are fortunate to have such caring volunteers and would like them to know they are appreciated.

Priscilla Bishop
Huntington

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor should be 500 words or less in length. We require letter writers to include his or her name, town of residence and home telephone number. We must authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous or contain unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, defamation of character and offensive language. All unknown or alleged facts and quotations offered by the author need to cite credible, unbiased sources.

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OPINION

HILLTOWN HISTORY

Fencing Who’s In and Who’s Out

By Deborah Daniels

Did you admire the ornamental iron fence around the cemetery of Laura Ellis as seen in last week’s photo of the Hilltown Hikers hike in Chesterfield? The iron fence stands resolute, almost on guard duty over the sole grave inside. Trees bend all around it trying to hide its location. But the snow betrays the hidden, black pointed fence arrows standing at attention. No one is sure if they are welcome or forbidden to enter the cemetery as the gate is broken open. Whether you are in or out, old iron fences were a thing of beauty that did their job well.

Have you seen the Capitol’s chain link fence with newly installed razor wire on top? This is in preparation for the inauguration of President Biden! Oh, for some elegant iron fence like the one at the White House. The White House had a wrought iron fence placed in 1818, before that it was a post and rail fence to keep grazing sheep away from the House. By 1833 an ornamental iron fence extended from the north side to the front of the White House until 1902 when it was replaced with a steel fence. Now the White House fence is 7 feet 6 inches in height with extra sharp spikes clamped onto the top of the existing iron fence spears. Fence maintenance in Washington D.C. has never been about rust deterioration but more about strengthening the fence against assaults by cars and scheming political extremists. It is a handsome, black steel fence with an elegant design showcasing the fountain in front of the White House.

All due respect to Robert Frost and Washington D.C., but the iron fences in the Hilltowns don’t need much mending, they have lasted a long time. How were these iron fences made so durable? Well for one, the oldest iron fences were made of wrought iron, forged by hand by blacksmiths using hammers, anvils, and heat. See the Chester cemetery fence photo. Wrought iron has less than 1% of carbon in it, making it soft and easy to work in a forge. The low carbon content makes it very rust resistant. The surface should show irregularities from hammering it.

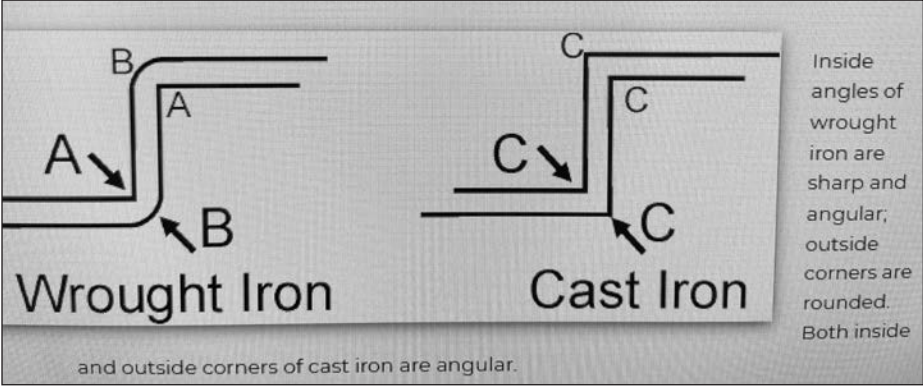


The iron fence surrounding Laura Ellis’s grave in Chesterfield, MA.

Experts who date iron will cut a piece of the iron to see if it splits along a grain like wood to determine if it is wrought iron.

Cast iron is made in molds of iron with a carbon content of 2-6%. That makes it more brittle and harder, as well as prone to rust immediately unless it is painted or a patina is applied. Seams from a mold maybe evident and it bends rather than tears along a grain when cut. Fences, gates and balconies made after 1860 are usually made of cast iron, mass produced and much cheaper than the labor-intensive wrought iron fences. Another clue for the discerning eye to distinguish wrought iron from cast iron is to look at corners, cast iron has perfectly square corners and wrought iron has both square, 90 degree inside corners, but round outside corners from being hammered over a form. Which do you think the Chesterfield cemetery fence is? Was the design of spears and arrows influenced by Native Americans? Most likely straight edged tools and simplicity in forging influenced the designs that were implemented in early fences.

The beautiful Westfield cemetery



A diagram distinguishing cast iron from wrought iron by the angles in the fence.



The wrought iron fence in front of the Chester cemetery.

fence that has the grave of the Falley’s family, the colonial Montgomery musket maker, looks to have both wrought and cast iron. It was locked and kept me out and away from seeing the gravesite when I visited it.

It was the Victorian era that brought out all that ornate, heavy cast iron garden furniture. The Victorian era is so named because it was the years Queen Victoria reigned in England from 1837 to 1901. Iron fences became much more ornate with scroll designs. Demand was big for iron garden furniture and plant stands with flower, fruit and grapevine motifs. This



The cemetery in Westfield, MA where Richard Falley, the Montgomery musket maker, is buried.

Submitted photos by Deborah Daniels

was all cast iron, made in molds. Was it two World Wars that reduced the demand for iron fences? Today fences are made of aluminum. The job of keeping you in or out is accomplished but oh how the elegance of iron endures. Celebrate your local iron fence.

Do you have a memory or historical curiosity from the Hilltowns that you’d like to share with your neighbors? Send your story and photos to countryjournal@turley.com.


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WILLIAMSBURG

LIBRARY

from page 1

across the five positions at Meekins Library including Circulation Assistant, School Circulation Assistant, IPT Circulation Assistant, Asst. Circulation & ILL, Custodian.

“I think we should follow the state minimum wage because, it might cost the town a few dollars, otherwise it might cost the town some really good employees,” said Selectman Denise Banister.

The board’s initial discussion of the topic didn’t have the budget numbers available, leading to some concerns about approving an unknown budget increase during such a tumultuous budget year. However, once they received the numbers, it was a quick decision to take a vote.

“I would say with that information, for \$1,300, I think it would stay with the practice that we stayed with before, matching the state minimum increase,” Selectman Dave Mathers said.

The board is not obligated by state law to follow the minimum wage. Town Administrator Charlene Nardi said municipalities are bound to follow the federal minimum wage. However, the Selectboard has expressed its preference to stay in line with the state if they can. In the coming years, they’ll be considering more \$0.75 increases to get up to \$15 wage for all town positions.

The board also supported the proclamation for a National Day of Recollection to honor those who lost their

lives as a result of COVID-19. According to the proclamation, more than 20 million Americans have been infected with the virus with more than 350,000 dying as a result of contracting it.

The observance took place on Tuesday night, with the town illuminating key buildings at 5:30 p.m., the ringing of church bells, and taking a moment during the hour to honor and remember those lost.

The proclamation stated, “with the advent of a number of vaccines that will prevent the spread of the virus and assuming the rapid and universal availability of these vaccines to all Americans, we have hope that the darkest days of the pandemic are behind us, nonetheless

our thoughts as we begin this new year remain fixed on those whom we have lost.”

“The Board and I are saddened by how many communities and families have been devastated by COVID19 and we appreciate the resident who brought this idea to our attention,” Nardi said. “The impact of this virus is life altering for everyone; we will never forget this time. And it is important, for unity, that we take a moment to remember those who have been lost to this horrific virus. I am thankful that the Officials and residents of Williamsburg are taking this pandemic serious and are doing everything they can to keep one another safe, by wearing masks and social distancing.”

BECKET

from page 1

The proposed facility would be leasing 10-acres from the property owners Josh and Adrienne Metcalf with the facility itself site back 500 feet from the road, hidden from view by a hill. Nearby residents expressed their top concerns were potential odor, noise, and security.

Goodenough said as part of the outdoor growing part of the facility, there would be a 12-week window where plants would be growing, with the window for odor being much less, but residents at Skyline Ridge are concerned about the close proximity have it carry during the summer.

It doesn’t give me comfort it’s [the odor] only going to be a couple months and it’s during the couple months where people are either at their second homes or all outdoors,” said David Edell, head of the Homeowner’s Association at Skyline Ridge.

“That smell is not what you’re thinking it’s going to be,” Goodenough replied. “There’s only 12 weeks of total flower time and of which it’s only the last couple there’d be any smell and that smell doesn’t waft or drift in ways that a lot of people think. I’ve literally never had complaints from any of our neighboring locations. I have 12 fields in Connecticut that are growing.”

In regard to odor, Vincent and Goodenough also said there are natural options that can be used to mitigate smells, such as evergreen trees.

Edell also expressed concerns the proximity of the facility may drive people

interested in checking it out and testing its security around the outdoor field to try and access it through Skyline Ridge.

“It’s a very short walk and it’s already been logged and cleared,” he said. “You can walk in from the cul-de-sac pretty easily.”

The facility will be protected with outdoor cameras with a 360-degree view and infrared. Live footage will be recorded, and the facility is expected to keep recordings for at least 60 days by the state. The exterior fence will enclose three acres with physical perimeter walks twice daily and an onsite security guard 24/7. The outdoor and indoor cultivation areas will also be fenced from each other with key-card access required. The head of security will be a former Massachusetts and Connecticut Police Officer.

“The reality is we’re adding a perimeter of protection for you folks,” Goodenough said. “We’re dropping in an incredibly sound and secure location that’s actually going to prevent anyone from being in this area.”

While residents complimented the thorough plan for security, it didn’t alleviate concerns about if it draws more individuals to the Skyline Ridge area or the quarry and potential issues if the people working or visiting the facility are parking there.

“I believe people from the quarry had told us before covid there were 14,000 that visited the quarry every year,” said Edell.

“This past summer, the quarry was

made worse because of covid,” added Michael Lavery. “It was particularly bad this year. But in the course of a few weeks, we had four calls for medical emergencies. The biggest problem was parking and fire and safety people not being able to get up there.”

Resident Lei-Anne Ellis expressed concerns about odors and issues with marijuana cultivators in California not following regulations properly. Vincent and Goodenough said California had many issues with growers who were already growing before the state put in regulations and getting everyone to be in compliance was difficult. They assured Ellis Massachusetts has much stricter regulations and enforcement.

“Massachusetts took the best legal regulations from every state and implemented them here,” Vincent said. “The regulations are far stricter here than what they would’ve been in the articles you read from.”

Resident Jeanne Sharples said her concern is that while the company seems to have its controls in place, they’re from out of state and what will they’ll be doing to be part of the community and not just a company coming in from out of state to get what they need and then leave. Ellis and Sharples both expressed concern the public outreach meeting the company held was on Jan. 3, right after the holidays, and many of the mail notices arrived after the fact due to postal delays.

Vincent said they can’t cross state lines with product due to Federal law, so

they have to stay in state for their work. He’d also love if they could fill out their 20 staff positions with local residents. Other parts of the positive impact plan include charity donations, a percent of gross sales of taxes, STEM outreach, and veteran and minority outreach.

“If we could hire 20 people out of becket that would be amazing,” he said. “We are trying to hire as local as possible. We are not trying to pull people from out of state or moving people in to work at the facility.”

Vincent and Goodenough invited anyone who is concerned to contact them and set up an appointment to visit one of their facilities in Connecticut, which can be scheduled in a safe manner following COVID-19 safety protocols.

While making its decision, Ellis urged the Planning Board to consider if this is in the best interest of the town when it does vote.

“Does the Planning Board think the ultimate good of having a cannabis cultivation farm being in Becket, is it the ultimate good?” she said. “I moved here because its rural and peaceful and it was agriculturally and residentially zoned. I’m not so sure a commercial property 3,000 feet from my house would’ve made me buy this house.”

The hearing is expected to continue at a Planning Board meeting in February. For more information on the proposal, including a video, and upcoming Planning Board hearings and agendas, visit www.townofbecket.org/planning-board.

WORTHINGTON

COA

from page 1

secretary for four years, during this time she planned many trips for the seniors. Currently, she is the interim coordinator, and her appointment ends at the end of October, as the Selectboard will be going through applications for the fulltime position in the summer.

“I was approached and asked if I was interested in the job,” Dassatti said. “I had to meet with the Selectboard and do an interview just like everyone else.”

Although she’s the interim coordinator, Dassatti said she wants to start activities and projects while she’s in the role. Additionally, she hopes to see her projects through and possibly continue on when the job changes hands again later this year.

Though Dassatti had high hopes for the things she can do for the COA and the seniors, she’s cognizant it’s only been one month and she’ll learn more as she continues working. Dassatti has been very busy with various meetings, ranging from Zoom meetings online to call in meetings. Not only does she meet with the COA, but she works with a Hilltown COA Collaborative, where other towns meet and speak about ideas and progress.

She’s learning a lot from these meetings and the COA Board members have been great in welcoming her and are wonderful to work with. She added the board is very important and they have helped her during her transition to this role, just as the members of the collaborative have helped her adjust.

“Most of my time has been me getting involved and getting acclimated to the COA, to do my job professionally,” Dassatti said. “It’s not just the work of one person here. I’d like to recognize the board members because what I see is that we all work together and have ideas that we pull off together. They do more than people realize.”

The COA used to hold a big trip once a year and local trips once a month. She used to plan and attend those trips, and she’s hoping to start holding something for the seniors monthly if they’re able to do so safely. There is a meeting with the board where they will discuss hopefully doing something for February and keep up with activities through the year.

Dassatti has been a resident in town for 47 years and has worked with the town and the local schools. She was on

the Board of Assessors, worked at R. H. Conwell Elementary School, worked at Gateway for 20 years, and has served on the Board of Directors for Worthington Golf. Dassatti has also volunteered a great deal, not just with the COA previously, but also for other town departments and groups like the Cub Scouts.

“I’m absolutely involved with the town. I know a lot of the seniors and I’ve been working with these people and their kids, so I know what this town needs,” Dassatti said. “Anyone I told about having the position said ‘oh that’s so perfect for you’ and it’s true. It’s hard, but I’m good with public relations.”

With Dassatti having experience with both the older and younger groups in the community, she’s hoping to start a intergenerational group for the COA, where younger teenagers and adults can volunteer to meet and hangout with local seniors. Dassatti said many seniors involved are grandparents, but their grandkids aren’t around, and it’d be good to have younger people come around and spend some time with them. They could interview seniors, as they have many stories they could tell, and

that alone could help to lift their spirits. This type of interaction and activity could help both seniors and younger adults and kids help to understand each other and build positive relations during these times. Additionally, Dassatti would like to see a strong volunteer program with young and old volunteers because there’s no limit to what volunteers can do.

The COA is still sending out the senior newsletter with information for seniors and other community members. Dassatti mentioned that other boards contribute information to the newsletter, to help inform the community along with the seniors.

“I just want the seniors to know that I’m here for them and they can feel comfortable in calling anytime they need,” Dassatti said. “I’ve been going through messages and phone calls to wish seniors a happy new year and check in with them.”

For any questions or additional information people can call Dassatti at 413-238-5962 or email her at coa@worthington-ma.us, where she will be available anytime and will do her best to respond quickly.

SCHOOLS & YOUTH

VIRTUAL

from page 1

“The major difference in this particular case is we’re differentiating between the Commonwealth’s Virtual Schools and virtual learning as a modality,” Superintendent David Hopson said. “The two state ‘virtual schools’ enroll students from throughout the state and then they get money from the state that is charged against the district from whence the students came.”

Gateway gets charged for the students that attend the state’s virtual schools, and they are taken off Gateway’s rosters, and the school will lose funding for that student.

Students who attend virtual schools need to apply and get accepted much like a school choice student would. These students will show up as school choice student and Gateway losses them as an enrolled student. Gateway also partners with another virtual school to provide additional course that Gateway doesn’t offer.

“It gets a little confusing because many traditional public high schools, Gateway included, also have online classes available to students to augment their typical offerings,” School Committee Chair Michele Crane said. “For example, my daughter took an online course in Latin because Gateway doesn’t offer Latin. It was considered a Gateway course taught by a service we use here at Gateway.”

Hopson explained that Gateway has a number of students who take additional course not offered by the district in a remote online basis where the school approves the vendor of the online course. Though the student is not enrolled as a full-time student in that virtual program, they are still Gateway students. Crane explained

that because Gateway losses funding for students enrolled in virtual schooling, it’s advantageous from a community and budgeting perspective to support a limit to students who want to attend a virtual school full-time. The committee discussed this subject at the previous meeting but didn’t come to a consensus, and they will be discussing the topic again at its next meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 27.

Athletic Director Matthew Bonenfant shared that Basketball try-outs will be starting soon, and students are interested in a hockey co-op with Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School, which approved the co-op sport for this winter season. Bonenfant shared that two students are interested in the hockey co-op, and they will be following sports guidelines for Southwick’s school, rather than Gateway’s guidelines, as they are the co-op host. Additionally, parents and guardians will be paying expenses to Southwick rather than Gateway; the financial responsibility of the sport will need to be taken up with Southwick.

Also, the Southwick school is currently doing virtual schooling and will do virtual practices as well; the sport will follow the school’s schedule and when students at Southwick are back in-person, the sports will be back in-person as well. Hockey will be held under the same parameters as basketball, there will be appropriate rules for the safety of the players. In order to allow students to participate in the hockey co-op the committee voted to approve joining the co-op by waiving the two-meeting rule for voting on a new business item so students can begin the sport on time.

CHANGES

from page 1

covid,” Christiansen said. “And in the last two weeks I’ve attended two virtual funerals for covid, and my brother-in-law has covid; I actually think the risk is rather low in our community and I think if there’s high safety protocols, I think we can really mitigate the kind of risk that is there.”

She added, “I’ve also been communicated by other parents, [who] I feel accountable to represent in this position, who are really concerned about the mental health issues around not having kids in school and so I just wanted to share that I feel like I’m holding both of those realities.”

Superintendent Michael Sullivan shared the latest information, dated Jan. 14, which showed Southampton having 41 cases in the past week, and 68 over the past 14 days. The rest of the district towns had combined for 19 in the past two weeks.

“Southampton is still trending upward,” Sullivan said. “It’s been trending upward for the past three weeks and that indicates to me it’s still uncontrolled in Southampton and that uncontrolled situation can, and is, coming to Hampshire Regional. If Southampton had leveled off, I’d be a little more reassured.”

According to Sullivan, there were four positive cases identified in the HRHS community last week; two were close contacts. A third positive case was not in school during the infectious and a fourth case, while in school during the infectious period, followed the safety protocols for social distancing and had no identified close contacts.

Kristin Smidy assured commit-

tee members the school is maintaining its strong emphasis on routine hand sanitizing, cleaning, social distancing during and between classes, and mask protocols. William Broadbuss, chemistry teacher and the president of the Hampshire Regional Education Association, encouraged the school to be cautious and not wait to act until there’s already spread in the building.

“It hasn’t changed my vote yet, but it is forcing me to really want to watch what is going on in Southampton and see how those numbers continue to change,” added Chesterfield Representative Geoff Gougeon.

Committee members Tom and Peter Cleary both had recommendations for the committee to keep monitoring the situation. Tom Cleary suggested looking at other schools in the state that may have dealt with outbreaks already to see if there’s any new mitigation strategies HRHS can adopt and Peter Cleary would like the communities to keep sending in their thoughts and feedback on the situation.

“I think it’s important we consider all feedback,” he said.

Chair Margaret Larson asked for a yes or no vote on whether to go back to remote the following week, which resulted in five committee members supporting a switch to remote. Larson said it was the same number in favor as last week. The committee will be continuing to monitor the situation to see if changes are needed in the future. For more information on the school’s COVID-19 mitigation strategies and protocols, visit www.hrhs.net.


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BLANDFORD

Selectboard handles town business

By Mary Kronholm

BLANDFORD — The Selectboard approved a \$6,910.88 contract with Carpet Warehouse for replacing carpeting at the Fire Department offices next door to the Post Office on Monday, Jan. 11.

Another contract approved was with Vanasse Jangen Brustlin, Inc. for “peer review services to the Blandford Planning Board for review of plans and reports for a proposed Adult Use Marijuana Cultivation and Marijuana Product Manufacturing Establishment, proposed on Otis Stage Road by Belle Fleur Holdings, LLC” for \$5,100. Also, a \$1,139 contract for maintenance of the Hewlett Packard printer/copier for town hall was approved.

Problems with the heating system necessitated another \$2,360 contract with County Wide Mechanical Services for repairs at the Post Office/Fire Department.

The board turned over a notification of Activity and Use Limitations resulting from apparent leaking from two former underground storage tanks at the Mass Turnpike Maintenance Center to Fire Chief Dave Mottor. The contamination appeared after the tanks were removed in 1990 and 1991.

Highway Superintendent Rene Senecal sent a letter to the board announcing his intent to retire this June 30. The Selectboard directed Town Administrator Joshua A. Garcia to initiate a search process.

The board congratulated Library Director Nicole Daviau for the American Library Association grant award of \$3,000.

Planning Board Chair Mike Hutchins and Zoning Board of Appeals Chair Don Brainerd discussed zoning bylaw amendments with the select board. The amendments will be a large portion of articles to be taken up at the Feb. 22 Special Town Meeting. This meeting was originally set for Feb. 1.

Garcia informed select board members that from a total field of 11 candidates for police chief, four remained, but two have already accepted other positions. The two remaining candidates are Tammy Weidhaas of Russell and Shawn Boyne of Harwinton, Conn. Garcia told the board that either candidate would be a “good fit,” and that both have their own unique sets of skills. The board will interview both candidates in person in Blandford with the Chester Selectboard on Wednesday, Jan. 20.

The board had a lengthy discussion on full-time versus part-time employee benefits and approved changes to the personnel policy regarding same. Full-time employees who have completed their probationary period shall have 10 days paid vacation annually and part-time employees’ vacation will be prorated. After one year, but less than five of employment, full-time employees shall receive an additional paid vacation and after five years paid vacation is capped at 21 days. These changes will take effect July 1.

The board also approved double-time pay for work on holidays. Regular part-time employees who are not scheduled to work on a day when a holiday falls may take compensatory time for that day within 60 days as approved by their department head.

The board moved to go into executive session to negotiate collective bargaining issues for non-union salaried personnel not to return to open session.

The board will meet next on Jan. 25.

Reminder for residents to return street list

BLANDFORD — Town Clerk Doris Jemiolo reminds residents to return the annual street list mailing that went out Friday, Jan. 15.

Included in this year’s mailing to all households is a survey for use by the Resilient Master Plan Committee, which will help determine the town’s future for open space, recreation, development and more.

There will also be information from the Porter Memorial Library, a message from the Municipal Light Plant on how to sign up for high speed internet access, and a request from the Council on Aging.

Jemiolo also reminds residents that failure to return the street listing can result in a voter’s inactivation.

“It’s really in everyone’s best interest to return the form and list every member of the household,” said Jemiolo.

RUSSELL

Library is all about owls, kits available

RUSSELL — Has anyone wondered what owls are doing in the winter and the other seasons? Lois Kiraly studies birds and has prepared an activity packet on owls for Russell Public Library patrons. Bird watchers watch out and they won’t be disappointed. Please stop by the library and pick-up a packet, or call for one and use the library curbside service.

“Screech! Screech!” Such exciting news for younger patrons and the library has a barn owl pellet kit for them. Kids will be able to dissect an owl pellet, just like a real scientist.

Call the library to reserve a kit at 413-862-6221, or contact russellpubliclib@gmail.com, so staff can set one aside. Please note only one kit per household.

CUMMINGTON

Dog licenses due by end of March

CUMMINGTON — Dog licenses are available by mail through the Town Clerk. Please send the following info along with a check made out to the Town of Cummington to Town Clerk at P.O. Box 128, Cummington, MA 01026, or the information and check can be dropped off in the drop box located on the east side in the back of the community house near the back entrance. Licenses are due by March 31, 2021.

Information required includes an updated rabies vaccination, name of dog, breed, color, age, new/renewal, spayed female, neutered male, name of owner, phone number, and address. The cost is \$6 for spayed and \$8 for not spayed. Please have the check made out to the Town of Cummington.

CHESTER

Town considering bylaw adjustments

By Shelby Macri

CHESTER — The Board of Selectmen discussed how to handle junk car appeals within town, as they have a bylaw for junk cars, but no appeals process for the bylaw enforcement and is considering other towns’ bylaws for a possible re-write of the current bylaw, if needed.

Chairman Barbara Pease Huntoon spoke about reaching out to other hilltowns on how they handle appeals for junk cars during the board meeting on Jan. 11. The only town to respond to her so far was Russell, and Huntoon shared that they allow police to issue tickets or fines for properties with junk cars. Though their bylaw for junk cars outlines the Police Department is able to do to this. Huntoon wants to contact and speak to more hilltowns before deciding on the matter.

She added the board may have to re-write the town’s bylaw’s on junk cars, which would need to be added to the Annual Town Meeting agenda for approval. Currently, the Board of Health or the Building Inspector can send letters and contact residences that pose imminent danger to the dwelling and the surrounding area. Recently the BOH issued a letter to a residence that posed a threat to the health of the surrounding environment and the residence has since taken better care.

Building Inspector Jason Forgue explained there are fines for multiple properties, and he’s collected from some properties, but that he’s only able to collect if the ownership of a property changes. Also, those fines have specific reasons and won’t apply to properties that are an eye-sore, but are not in imminent danger of falling or hurting the community.

These enforcement steps can only be taken for specific reasons and don’t offer an appeal process if a fine is issued. Currently, the town has a notification process and then a fine if measures aren’t taken to address the issue, the town is lacking the process for taking action necessary after issuing a fine. The board discussed having junk cars listed as a BOH issue, but that would only apply if the junk cars had leaks polluting the environment or animals nesting within cars.

Board of Health member Elizabeth Massa said she already sent notifications to residences by mail, but many haven’t replied. The Selectboard then discussed the possibility of having the Police Sheriff present letters in person. The board agreed to contact the Police Department to ask if they could provide assistance for this matter.

“We didn’t decide on a course of action last meeting, and it will be on a future agenda,” Huntoon said. “It’s a bit of a process, but I want to speak with more towns on how they handle this, and then we’ll go from there.”

Huntoon will be contacting towns to inquire on their process, and hopes to find a suitable solution to current issues with junk cars. The board is making sure they’ve looked at every angle before deciding to re-write the town bylaw. The town will continue operating under the current bylaw until a different course of action is decided upon.

Theatre partners for three show season

CHESTER — The Chester Theatre Company is thrilled to announce that CTC is partnering with Hancock Shaker Village for the 2021 summer season under the name Chester@Hancock.

CTC will be staging a three-show season outdoors under a tent on the grounds of the treasured Berkshires institution. This is a temporary change in location for the safety of audiences, performers, staff and crew due to restrictions caused by COVID-19. The CTC will return to the Town Hall Theatre in Chester in 2022.

The Village has the all the amenities necessary to provide a comfortable, enjoyable, and safe experience for everyone. Make a day of it — grab a bite at the café, take a walk on the trails, and tour the 20 historic buildings on the campus (separate admission required).

“I’m thrilled by our partnership,” said Producing Artistic Director Daniel Elihu Kramer. “[It] will offer a remarkable experience to our audiences, and an opportunity for patrons of each of our organizations to learn more about the other. Hancock Shaker Village is a treasure of our region and a beautiful location in all seasons. I look forward to sharing the summer there with you.”

“We are thrilled to welcome Chester Theatre Company this summer,” added Jennifer Trainer Thompson, director of Hancock Shaker Village. “They’ve found a creative solution to a vexing challenge, and we welcome the opportunity to have outdoor live theater at the Village all summer long.”

The 2021 season will consist of three productions, one each in June, July, and August. Shows and exact dates and times will be announced soon, so stay tuned for more information.

OTIS

COVID-19 tests, flu shots return Feb. 26

OTIS — The Otis Council on Aging and community health programs are sponsoring COVID-19 testing and regular flu shots at the Otis Town Hall. The next day for shots and tests will be Friday, Feb. 26, and on each fourth Friday thereafter. No appointment is necessary.

Drive-through and mask wearing protocols will be in place. Please bring medical insurance cards. Hours will be 10 a.m. to noon.

Notice Otis historical events start Jan. 28

OTIS — The Otis Preservation Trust and the Otis Historical Commission are hosting a “Notice Otis” series of cultural and educational events this winter.

On Thursday, Jan. 28, Bonnie Parsons, town historical preservationist, will give a PowerPoint presentation on the History of Otis’ Architectural Styles.

Otis has an architectural history to be proud of with pre-Revolutionary houses set among bungalows and ranches, with buildings designed to look like Greek temples and a French Second Empire building that aimed to convey its builder’s sophistication. There are houses whose porches were inspired by Italian villas and Capes that were built after World War II to house a growing population. This talk will sort out the styles in a narrative that will give Otis a way to look at its buildings and enjoy its architectural gifts.

The first event will be held online via Zoom at 7 p.m. To Register for this event go to optin.today or the town’s website, townofotisma.com.



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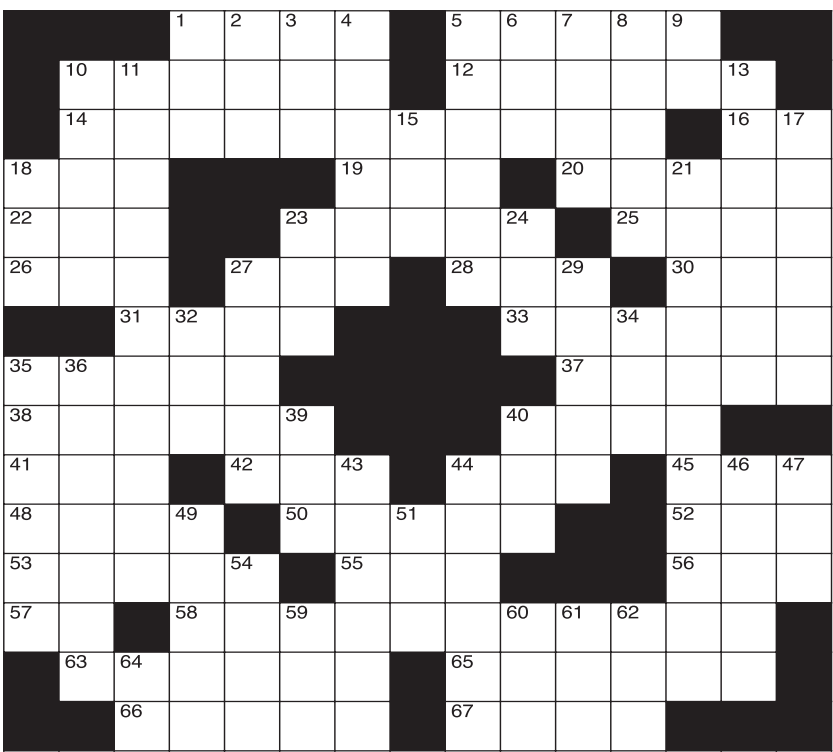
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CLUES ACROSS

- Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- 2014 Winter Olympics host
- Soft fabric
- Covered in flowers
- Works at a college or university
- Keeps us cool
- Corpuscle count (abbr.)
- Similar
- Birthplace of Muhammad
- They __
- Preamble to a book
- Southern China people
- Hair product
- The woman
- Partner to cheese
- One point north of due east
- Round Dutch cheese
- Be in awe of
- Christmas song

CLUES DOWN

- Nowhere to be found (abbr.)
- Not new
- Brew
- Stain with mud
- Chief or leader
- Luke Skywalker's mentor __-Wan
- Type of sauce
- Sharpens
- Priestess loved by Zeus
- Jean Henri __, French entomologist
- Regulates supply of fuel
- Disturbing and horrifying
- Equal (prefix)
- Hosts film festival
- Tattered piece of clothing
- Rich desserts
- Unique motor (abbr.)
- Disfigure
- Chemical substance

- Emits coherent radiation
- Something that is comparable to another
- Monetary unit
- The cutting part of a drill
- Resinlike substance secreted by certain insects
- Touch lightly
- Toyota SUV
- __ and Andy, TV show
- Made less dangerous
- Assets under management (abbr.)
- Nostrils
- Moved quickly
- Thai isthmus
- TV personality Roker
- Honors anew
- Rags
- One who obtains pleasure from inflicting pain or others
- Marketplaces
- Dark brown or black

- Slang for famous person
- Department of Labor
- The A-team rode around in one
- Beach cabin
- Living things
- Gun (slang)
- Disconsolate
- Stroke gently
- Actress Richards
- "Cletus Hogg" actor
- Returned material authorization (abbr.)
- Brazilian mountain range
- Upset
- One with supernatural insight
- Insecticide
- Taxi
- "Much __ about nothing"
- Cannister
- Popular clothing retailer

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20
Aries, you will get great satisfaction from various activities this week. Therefore, fill your schedule with plenty of things. Take initiative and invite friends along for an adventure.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22
Cancer be careful with the way you behave and present yourself this week. You just don't know who may be watching what you do. Keep a low profile.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23
Libra, as soon as things get serious this week, you may be ready to make a fast exit. It's better if you stick around and lend your opinion to the situation at hand.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20
Don't try to rationalize the feelings that are moving through you this week, Capricorn. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Acknowledge the emotions as they come.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18
Aquarius, do not hide your feelings in a particularly moving situation. Others will empathize with you and appreciate your emotional honesty.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20
This week you may want to get away from it all to have a different perspective on your life, Pisces. You may travel even further than first imagined.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21
You may get caught up in some conflicts that you're either not ready for or have no interest to deal with, Sagittarius. Take it all in quietly for now.

VIRGO

Aug 24/Sept 22
Virgo, this week the stars may be playing tricks on you. You may stumble though a few things, but it won't take long to get back on the right path.

TAURUS

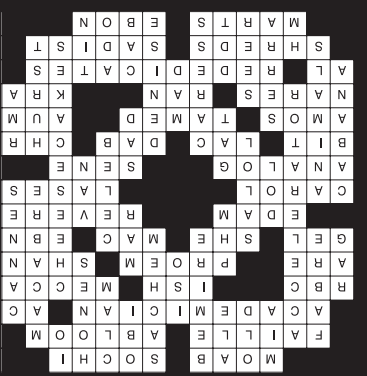
Apr 21/May 21
Take care of yourself this week, Taurus. Practicing self-care may mean booking a spa treatment or simply catching up on a little rest and recuperation.

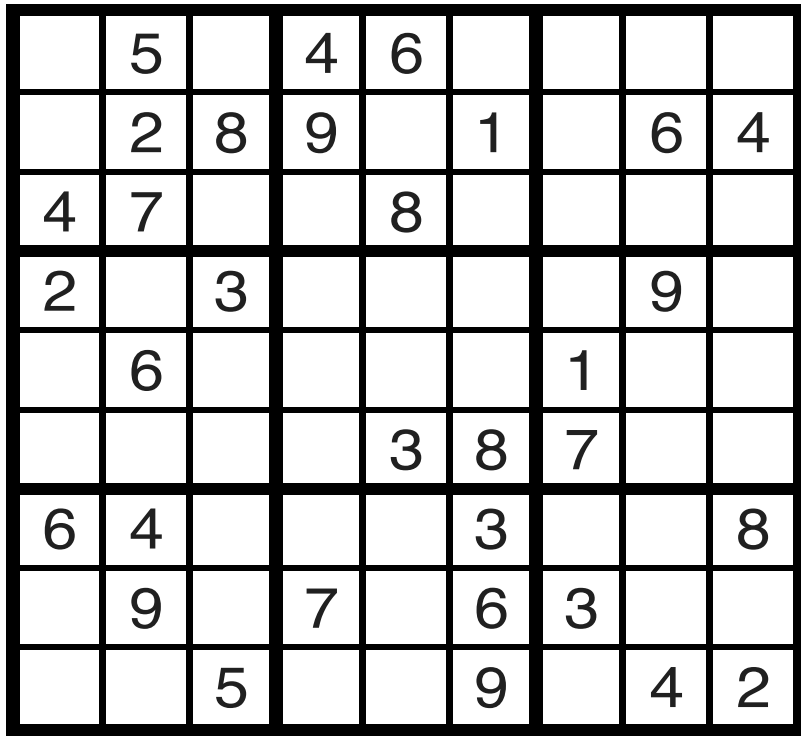
LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23
Receiving mixed messages, Leo? Enlist a trusted advisor to help you sort through the hazy level of communication that is coming your way. Another perspective is handy.

answers

2	4	9	6	1	8	9	8	7
1	9	8	9	4	7	2	6	8
8	7	6	8	2	9	1	4	9
9	2	7	8	8	9	4	1	6
8	8	1	4	6	2	7	9	9
9	6	4	7	9	1	8	8	2
6	1	2	9	8	8	9	7	4
4	9	9	1	7	6	8	2	8
7	8	8	2	9	4	6	9	1





SUDOKU

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

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OBITUARIES

Rachel Rose Doyle Meher, 97

Rachel Rose Doyle Meher, 97, passed away peacefully in Noble Hospital Jan. 12, 2021 with family by her side. Rachel was born Sept. 11, 1923 to John and Doris (Turner) Rose and was a lifelong resident of Chester, attending the local schools. She was a dedicated resident of Chester serving as its Treasurer, Tax Collector, Town Clerk and Assessor over her lifetime. She was a founding member of Chester’s Senior Citizen group. Rachel also served as the scholarship custodian for the Chester High School Alumni for many years. She was a member of the United Church of Christ and Eastern Star. Rachel worked many years in the offices of Chester’s Cortland Grinding Wheel company and was later a teller at the Chester Cooperative Bank, notably being at work when the bank was robbed in the 1970s. Her favorite pastimes were knitting, sewing, visiting with family and friends and especially sitting by the water at Otis Reservoir.



Rachel is survived by her daughter Kathy Bodendorf and children, Jarren (Stephanie) and Jennifer (Nate) Houle; her son, David Doyle and daughters, Tracy and Teresa; her daughter-in-law Eleanor Doyle and children, Deena, Donald and Justin; and 12 great grandchildren. Rachel was predeceased by her husband’s Fred Doyle and Leo Meher; her brothers, Clifford and Francis; her children, Linda and Douglas Doyle and stepdaughter, Cheryl Meher Brown.

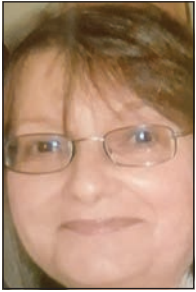
The family would like to thank Sherry Henry and Marcella Phelps for helping Rachel enjoy living in her home for as long as she could. Rachel, known for being kind and soft spoken, will be missed by all those who knew her.

A graveside service will be held in the spring. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Chester Council on Aging donation account in Rachel’s memory.

Eleanor Clapp

Eleanor Clapp, aka Trink, passed away surrounded by her loving family after her second courageous battle with cancer on Jan.14, 2021. She was born Oct. 13,1952 to Angelo and Jean (MacDonald) Curro. She grew up in Russell, MA. She left us with many memories of love and lots of laughter. She loved her family, her friends, her neighbors of Winsted, CT, and her cats.

She was predeceased by her parents and her beloved nephew Kenneth Dean. She leaves behind her loving sister Nina Dean and Radames Lopez of Westfield; loving brother Mac Curro and his wife Terri of Florida; nephew Kevin Dean of Westfield;



niece Ashley Hawkins, her husband Tommy and boys Landon and Chase of Westfield; nephew Matthew Curro of Northampton; Great nephew’s Nate and Greg Dean of Westfield; Dominic Dean, his girlfriend Cara, and soon to welcome Eleanora of Springfield, VT; Uncle Harold MacDonald and wife Judy of California; uncle James Macdonald of Palmer; aunt Jeanette Fish of Ludlow. She also leaves behind many cousins on the Curro and MacDonald sides; step nieces and nephew Tasha Hamberg, Kellyana Lopez, Natali Pilecki, Chris Lopez and many more extended family and friends. The funeral will be at a later date.

Kenneth “Kenny” Bean Sr.

Kenneth “Kenny” Bean Sr. died on Jan. 11, 2021, at the age of 66, in his home in Sun City West, Arizona, with his wife by his side. Kenny fought and beat cancer four times over the last 19 years, but due to having COPD he was unable to beat COVID-19.

Born in Richford, VT, he moved with his family to Massachusetts as a child and lived there for most of his life. He moved to Arizona in 2008 to enjoy the heat, the sunshine, and his retirement.

Kenny worked for PCA Box Co in Northampton, MA and The YMCA of Westfield, MA. Kenny was the kind of guy that would talk to anyone. He would share a story that might make you blush or make you envy the fun of his youth. He lived the hippie life enjoying many outdoor concerts. He saw Bob Dylan play in a field in Worthington, MA. He almost made it to Woodstock, but his car broke down; he hung out



at Arlo Guthrie’s house instead. He was the old man who bought a Harley and rode it until he physically could not any longer. He had too many tattoos to count and had a story for each one. Kenny was a “tough” guy with a big heart. He melted for his grandchildren who called him Papa.

Nowadays you could often find him busy working on a new project. In the spring and fall he would be outside working on his metal art, building a bridge, or planting his cactus gardens and when the temperature hit 120 degrees, he would paint ceramics, cane chairs, or play some guitar hero inside. He watched his news every day and made sure his family was up to date on current events. He loved shad fishing and hunting while he lived in Massachusetts. His love of the Patriots followed him to Arizona. He loved the entertainment of WWE wrestling. He loved taking road trips with his wife. Most of all he loved his fam-

ily and was proud to be a husband, dad, and Papa.

Kenny had a passion for collecting things because “they might be worth something someday.” He has left his family with the most valuable thing he could and that is the memory of good times, laughs, and love.

Kenny leaves behind his wife of 47 years Doreen (Gregson) Bean; his daughter Danielle (Bean) Carbonneau, her husband J and their four sons Zane, Logan, Ollie and Auggie; his son Kenneth Bean Jr, his wife Ashley and their two daughters Addison and Avery; his sister Jean Fitch and her husband George; his brothers Joe Bean and Brian Bean, several nieces, and nephews; as well as his beloved dog Snaggletooth and his deaf cat Spike.

Kenny is predeceased by his parents Mildred Frechette and Philip Bean, his sisters Nancy, Shirley, and Pam, a niece Bobbi Jo and nephew Stevie.

Kenny’s family will be holding a service in Massachusetts in the spring to celebrate his life.

DEATH NOTICES

BEAN SR., KENNETH
Died Jan. 11, 2021

CLAPP, ELEANOR
Died Jan. 14, 2021
Services to be held at later date.

MEHER, RACHEL ROSE
Died Jan. 12, 2021

Country Journal
OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$100, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

PUBLIC NOTICES

**Town of Blandford
Town Clerk Notice**
Received on December 23, 2020 with approval from the office of the Attorney General pertaining to the Special Town Meeting September 28, 2020 Case No. 9929
Warrant Articles # 9 (General)
Pursuant to MGL Ch. 40, sec. 32 required posting/publishing.
Articles 9 changing the wording on Arts Council Creation
Claims of invalidity by

reason of any defect in the procedure of adoption or amendment may only be made within ninety days of such posting.
Copies of the letter from the Attorney General and the bylaw amendments in their entirety may be obtained from the Town Clerk’s Office during public business hours, Monday from 5 to 7 p.m. at Town Hall and viewed on the town website.
Doris L. Jemiolo
Town Clerk
Posted at the following locations:

Blandford Town Hall
Porter Post Office
Porter Memorial Library
Blandford Country Store
Blandford Fire Department Training Office
Chief of Police, Blandford
01/14, 01/21/2021

**REQUEST FOR
QUALIFICATIONS
TOWN OF RUSSELL
CONSULTING SERVICES
RUSSELL BUILDING RE-USE
PLANNING PROJECT**
The Town of Russell invites responses for consulting services to perform a general site

assessment and feasibility study of three vacant buildings. The project is to provide a guide for the future redevelopment of these three properties, stabilize the respective neighborhoods where these buildings are located, create jobs and business opportunities, and provide a range of multi-income and multi-generational housing opportunities. Funding for this project is provided by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through the FY 2019 Massachusetts Department of Housing and

Community Development’s Block Grant Program.
A more detailed Request for Qualifications (RFQ) is available at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 Congress Street, Springfield, MA 01104, (413) 781-6045, from 9 AM to 5 PM. The RFQ will be made available on January 21st until the due date specified below in digital format via email by request at sortiz@pvpc.org. Parties requesting the RFQ electronically are strongly encouraged to verify that their email request has been received.

PVPC is not responsible for any requests that are not received. The Russell Board of Selectmen will be the awarding and contracting authority.
Completed responses are to be submitted no later than 3:00 PM, Friday, February 19th, 2021 at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 60 Congress Street – 1st Floor, Springfield, MA 01104-3419, Attention: John O’Leary, Senior Planner.
01/21/2021

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dwellings advertised are available on
an equal opportunity basis.

VACATION RENTALS


WARM WEATHER IS Year Round
In Aruba. The water is safe, and the
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Sleeps 8. Email: carolaction@aol.com
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**Classified
Advertising
DEADLINES**

**QUABBIN & SUBURBAN
FRIDAY AT NOON**

**HILLTOWNS
MONDAY AT NOON**

FOR RENT


All real estate advertising in this
newspaper is subject to the Federal
Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes
it illegal to advertise any preference,
limitation or discrimination based on
race, color, religion, sex, handicap,
familial status (number of children and
or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry,
age, marital status, or any intention to
make any such preference, limitation or
discrimination.
This newspaper will not knowingly accept
any advertising for real estate that is in
violation of the law. Our readers are hereby
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this newspaper are available on an equal
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discrimination call The Department of
Housing and Urban Development " HUD"
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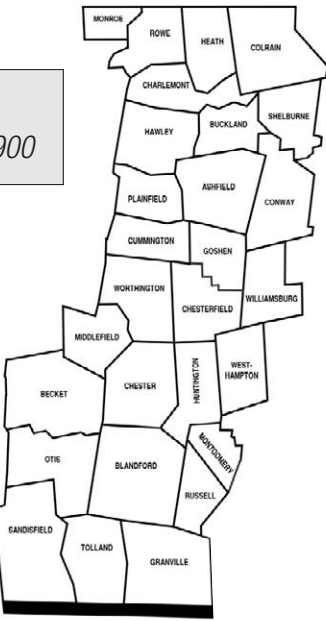
MAIL TO: Classifieds, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069
or call toll free: 413-283-8393

DEADLINES: HILLTOWNS – **MONDAY AT NOON**
QUABBIN & SUBURBAN – **FRIDAY AT NOON**

CATEGORY:

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	Base Price \$10.00	22	Base Price \$11.50
23	Base Price \$12.00	24	Base Price \$13.50
25	Base Price \$14.00	26	Base Price \$15.00
27	Base Price \$16.00	28	Base Price \$17.50
29	Base Price \$18.00	30	Base Price \$19.50
31	Base Price \$10.00	32	Base Price \$11.50
33	Base Price \$12.00	34	Base Price \$13.50
35	Base Price \$14.00	36	Base Price \$15.00
37	Base Price \$16.00	38	Base Price \$17.50
39	Base Price \$18.00	40	Base Price \$19.50

Hilltowns
Circulation: 11,900



Buy the Hilltowns ZONE for \$9.50 for 20 words
plus 50¢ for each additional word.
Add \$10 for a second Zone or add \$15 to run in
ALL THREE ZONES.

First ZONE base price

Add a second ZONE **\$10.00**

Add a third ZONE **\$5.00**

Subtotal

x Number of Weeks

TOTAL Enclosed

Includes additional words

Run my ad in the following ZONE(s):

☐ Hilltowns

☐ Suburban

☐ Quabbin

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Town: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Number of Weeks: _____ X per week rate = \$ _____

Credit Card: ☐ MasterCard ☐ VISA ☐ Discover ☐ Cash ☐ Check# _____

Card #: _____ Exp. Date _____ CVV _____

Amount of charge: _____ Date: _____

OUR CLASSIFIEDS REACH 50 COMMUNITIES EVERY WEEK!



Russ LaPierre of the Hilltown Hikers maps part of Black Panther Ski in Huntington. The Hikers have almost finished mapping the entire area. Submitted photos



Forgotten fuel cans and other artifacts at the Black Panther Ski area in Huntington.



Russ LaPierre shows off one the hikers' finds.



An old wheel abandoned next to a tree.



Russ LaPierre checks out one of the old ski resort's lift wheels attached high to a tree.

Submissions are always welcome.

Send us your news and photos.

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24 Water Street
Palmer, MA 01069

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BECKET

Jacob's Pillow partnership spurs 2021 activities

BECKET — Jacob's Pillow welcomes artists to its campus for residencies, new commissions, and virtual premieres this winter and spring in an ongoing commitment to provide a home for dance and for dialogue.

In what continues to be a challenging time for dancemakers to find ways to make and present work, the Pillow has deepened many of its preexisting relationships with artists as well as opened its doors for new ventures, resulting in a diverse and provocative array of artistic projects from January through June. Following the devastating loss of the Doris Duke Theatre in Nov. 2020, the organization continues residencies in the Perles Family Studio, the remaining winterized studio space on its campus. Amongst the success of a carefully executed fall season of COVID-19 compliant residencies, the organization continues to look ahead to a summer 2021 Festival, with planned on-site performances and activities including Professional Advancement Programs of The School at Jacob's Pillow and the newly expanded Archives in Blake's Barn.

"Thanks to a major grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, we will be able to continue 'bubble' residencies in the Pillow Lab, giving direct support to artists who are able to resume dancing together safely," said Pamela Tatge, executive and artistic director. "Their support also ensures that we can continue the Inside the Pillow Lab docuseries, giving audiences in our region and around the world a window into what artists are creating during these turbulent times. At the same time, we continue providing virtual programs to stay engaged with communities in Berkshire county and artists and educators across the country. It's imperative that we continue to stay in conversation and gain insight and inspiration from this art-form that connects us to ourselves and each other."

"Dance requires the creative interplay between bodies and space, something that has been impossible for dance artists over the past ten months," added Emil Kang, program director for arts and culture at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. "We are thrilled to support the return to artistic community

through bubble residencies at Jacob's Pillow, allowing artists to resume their passion and purpose in the safety of a dance oasis."

Following a successful round of "bubble" residencies in the fall, and thanks to a leadership gift from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Jacob's Pillow will host six additional resident artists and companies, with digital presentations by each as part of the Inside the Pillow Lab series. Artists and company members will quarantine and undergo rounds of COVID-19 testing prior to arrival, and will remain onsite with all food and supplies delivered for the duration of the residency period. Pillow staff will provide contactless support to the companies, with mask wearing and social distancing required during any interaction.

From late December 2020 through June 2021, the Pillow welcomes Dorrance Dance, Taylor Stanley, Nelida Tirado, INSPIRIT, Ronald K. Brown/EVIDENCE, and Music From The Sole for Pillow Lab residencies. In addition to residencies on the Jacob's Pillow grounds, a residency at nearby MASS

MoCA for choreographer Zoe Scofield will receive funding and support from the Pillow Lab program. Jacob's Pillow continues its regional engagement by supporting an extended community residency with Boston-based choreographer Mar Parrilla in the city of Pittsfield. Parrilla's activities during her residency include virtual Dance for Social Justice workshops alongside Pittsfield Moves!, engaging local organizations and individuals in pursuing avenues for storytelling and community building through movement with a decolonizing and antiracist framework. Meanwhile, dance educators and teaching artists will participate virtually in Dance Education Laboratory workshops that engage with the Pillow's extensive digital archive while exploring an embodied approach to teaching dance history.

The Pillow also continues to share digital resources from its renowned Archives including monthly releases of newly curated playlists, interactive themes and essays written by leading dance scholars, episodes of the PillowVoices podcast.